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Robert E. Dvorak

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EXAMINER

VAN DOREN, BETH

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3623

DATE MAILED: 12/18/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/755,355

Applicant(s)

DVORAK ET AL.

Examiner

Beth Van Doren

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 October 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 and 39-42 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 and 39-42 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. The following is a non-final office action in response to communications received 10/05/2006. Claims 1, 4-15, 39, and 41 have been amended. Claims 1-15 and 39-42 are pending in the current office action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

3. Claims 1-15 and 39-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claims contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventors, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Claims 1-15 recite "cloning daily sales history data". However, examiner is unable to find support in the specification for this limitation. The summary of the invention on page 1, lines 13-20, and the detailed description, page 1, line 28-page 2, line 7, disclose cloning goods sales history data. However, there is no mention of this sales history data being daily (or of any specific timeframe for that matter). The only place timeframes are discussed are on page 2, lines 17-25, which discloses an interval being selected for the for tracking/monitoring actual sales. The only place that the term daily appears is in original claim 41, which states that the monitoring/tracking interval is daily or more frequent periods. However, even if this was incorporated into the specification, there is still no implication that the sales history data is

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cloned in daily increments. As an example, if a retail store maintained and forecasted weekly sales data, the store could still monitor actual data daily to see the progress towards the weekly totals. Therefore, Examiner respectfully submits that "cloning daily sales history data" was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventors, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Claim 39 recites the limitations "cloning daily or more frequent sales history data" and "cloned daily sales history data", which was also not described in the specification for the same reasons set forth above.

Claims 40-42 depend from claim 39 and therefore contain the same deficiencies.

4. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-15 and 39-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1 recites "cloning daily sales history data for sales of a good at a plurality of selling locations from actual daily sales history data of an other good sold at the plurality of selling locations". Thus, this limitation recites that data for a good is cloned from the actual data of an other good. The claim then goes on to recite that the actual data of the other good is tracked and used to rescale the associated data. Therefore, it is unclear what is specifically occurring in the claim, as it appears that the other good is a known good with known sales data

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and it is this other good that is being tracked in order to rescale the product with no sales history. Further, this seems to contradict the specification, which states on pages 1-2 that sales history data for sales of a cloned good is associated with an other good (that lacks a sales history), that the associated sales history data is scaled based on anticipated sales of the other good, that the actual sales of the other good is tracked and that the associated sales history data is rescaled based on the actual sales data collected. Therefore, for examination purposes, the first limitation of claim 1 has been construed as --cloning sales history data for sales of an other good at a plurality of selling locations from actual daily sales history data of a good sold at the plurality of selling locations--. Clarification is required.

Claims 2-15 depend from claim 1 and therefore contain the same deficiencies

Claim 39 recites "cloning daily or more frequent sales history data for sales of a good at a plurality of selling locations from actual daily or more frequent sales history data of an other good sold at the plurality of selling locations", which is substantially the same to the limitation discussed above, and thus the same rejections apply. Clarification is required. For examination purposes, the first limitation of claim 39 has been construed as --cloning daily or more frequent sales history data for sales of an other good at a plurality of selling locations from actual daily or more frequent sales history data of a good sold at the plurality of selling locations--.

Claims 40-42 depend from claim 39 and therefore contain the same deficiencies.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

6. Claims 1, 2, and 8-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Beyer et al. (U.S. 6,978,249).

As per claim 1, Beyer et al. teaches a computer implemented method of supplying a sales history for a good lacking a sales history, including:

cloning sales history data for sales of an other good at a plurality of selling locations from actual daily sales history data of a good sold at the plurality of selling locations (See figures 2 and 4, column 1, lines 30-56, column 2, lines 40-55, column 3, lines 37-55, column 4, lines 1-20 and 40-50, column 8, lines 64-67, wherein sales history data for a product that closely resembles another, new product is associated with this new product);

scaling the cloned sales history data upward or downward based on anticipated sales of the other good (See figure 5, column 2, lines 50-67, column 4, lines 50-65, column 9, lines 55-65, wherein the sales history data is adjusted to calculated expected sales);

tracking actual sales of the other good for an interval (See column 1, lines 30-56, column 5, lines 25-45, column 9, line 65-column 10, line 30, wherein actual sales and demand are tracked over an interval); and

rescaling the cloned sales history data based on actual sales of the other good during the interval (See figure 5, column 5, lines 25-45, column 9, line 65-column 10, line 30, which discloses rescaling the sales history data based on received demand data to adjust the calculated amount).

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As per claim 2, Beyer et al. teaches wherein the rescaling takes place after the interval without intervention of a user (See column 3, lines 53-57, column 5, lines 25-45, wherein the forecasting system, including the updating module, operates without human intervention).

As per claims 8 and 9, Beyer et al. discloses scaling the cloned sales history data including modifying the cloned sales history data (See figures 2 and 4, column 4, lines 10-20 and 35-67, column 5, lines 25-45, wherein the associated sales history is modified when associated with the new product).

As per claims 10, 11, 14, and 15, Beyer et al. discloses wherein scaling and rescaling the cloned sales history data includes storing a scaling factor to be applied to the cloned sales history data (See column 4, lines 21-34 and 55-67, column 7, lines 30-67, column 8, lines 5-35, column 9, lines 20-37, and column 10, lines 20-30, wherein the sales history is scaled and rescaled using factors, such as time, run-rate, and standard deviation).

As per claims 12 and 13, Beyer et al. discloses rescaling the cloned sales history data including modifying the cloned sales history data (See figure 5, column 5, lines 25-45, column 9, line 65-column 10, line 30, wherein the rescaling modifies data associated with the original sales history to generate an updated sales plan for the new product).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beyer et al. (U.S. 6,798,249) in view of Ando (U.S. 6,032,125).

As claim 3, Beyer et al. discloses wherein the rescaling takes place after new data becomes available (See figure 5, column 5, lines 25-45, column 9, line 65-column 10, line 30). Beyer et al. further teaches wherein the rescaling takes place after the interval without intervention of a user (See column 3, lines 53-57; column 5, lines 25-45, wherein the forecasting system, including the updating module, operates without human intervention). However, Beyer et al. does not expressly disclose that the rescaling takes place repeatedly on a predetermined cycle beginning at the end of the interval.

Ando discloses wherein rescaling/reconsidering the data repeatedly on a predetermined cycle beginning at the end of the interval (See figures 3, 4, and 7, column 2, lines 1-20, 30-40, and line 66-column 3, line 3, column 4, lines 20-30, column 6, lines 55-65, wherein the scaling occurs).

Both Ando and Beyer et al. disclose demand forecasting for a product using a profile of historic data. Both the systems are computer-implemented. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have the updates of Beyer et al. occur in predetermined cycles, such as the predetermined assessments of Ando, in order to increase the speed to action of the system by causing the assessments to occur on a definable, on-going basis. See column 2, lines 1-20 and 30-40, which discloses the precision of repeated model optimization based on demand fluctuation.

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9. Claims 4-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beyer et al. (U.S. 6,798,249) in view of Crosswhite (U.S. 6,611,726).

As per claims 4 and 5, Beyer et al. teaches wherein cloning sales history data includes retrieving the sales history data (See column 4, lines 10-20 and 34-41, column 5, lines 40-67, column 6, lines 20-35, wherein the data is extracted). However, Beyer et al. does not expressly disclose that this sales history data is copied.

Crosswhite discloses forecasting using historical data, such as prior product demand, wherein a copy of the located historical data is retrieved (See column 8, lines 27-35 and line 55-column 9, line 25, wherein a copy of the data associated with the forecast is retrieved).

Both Crosswhite and Beyer et al. disclose using historical sales data concerning a product to perform forecasting, where the sales data is retrieved from a database. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to retrieve a copy of the data (instead of the data itself) in order to increase the integrity of the originally stored data by only manipulating a copy of such data, thus increasing the chance that the retrieved data is representative of normal data, containing no data anomalies. See column 9, lines 15-35, which discuss flaws in retrieved data.

10. Claims 6-7, 39, and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beyer et al. (U.S. 6,798,249).

As per claims 6-7, Beyer et al. teaches wherein cloning sales history data includes retrieving the sales history data (See column 4, lines 10-20 and 34-41, column 5, lines 40-67,

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column 6, lines 20-35, wherein the data is extracted). However, Beyer et al. does not expressly disclose that this sales history data is retrieved using a reference or a pointer.

Beyer et al. discloses using historical sales data concerning a product to perform forecasting, where the sales data is retrieved from a database. Examiner takes official notice that it is old and well known in the programming arts that a reference is a small object containing information which refers to data elsewhere, as opposed to containing the data itself. Further, Examiner takes official notice that it is old and well known in the programming arts that pointers are a specific type of reference whose values are used to refer to ("point to") another value stored elsewhere in computer memory. Both pointers and references have the known benefits of being able to manipulate references to data without actually having to modify the data itself. Further, pointers and references increase flexibility in where objects can be stored, how they are allocated, and how they are passed between areas of code, making the sharing of data between different code areas easier. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use references and pointers to retrieve the data from the databases in Beyer et al. in order to increase the flexibility of the system based on the known benefits of pointers and references, discussed above.

11. Claims 39 and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beyer et al. (U.S. 6,798,249) in view of Singh et al. (U.S. 7,080,026).

Claim 39 recites equivalent limitations to claim 1 and therefore is rejected using the same art and rationale as set forth above in the rejection of claim 1. Beyer et al. further discloses comparing the actual sales of the good to the sales history data of the cloned good (See column

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5, lines 25-45, column 7, lines 54-67, column 9, line 65-column 10, line 30). Beyer et al. further discloses grouping products into product families with similar historical demand patterns (See column 3, lines 39-56, column 7, lines 54-67, wherein products are grouped into product families). However, Beyer et al. does not expressly disclose comparing the actual sales to the sales history data for a set of candidate goods and evaluating whether the sales history of one or more of the candidate goods better matches said actual sales.

Singh et al. discloses comparing product forecasts and sales to other related products to adjust the forecasts (See column 3, line 50-column 4, line 5 and line 65-column 5, line 7, column 6, lines 35-60, column 7, lines 20-35, column 8, lines 25-35, which discloses comparing product forecasts to other related products. See also column 13, lines 40-55, column 15, lines 50-65, column 17, lines 20-31 and line 59-column 18, line 5).

Beyer et al. discloses storing sales history data for goods as associated when the goods are in a product family. Beyer et al. further discloses that this product family shares certain life-cycle characteristics, such as monthly demand profiles. Beyer et al. also discloses grouping a new product with a product family before any sales data is known about the product and then comparing the new product with the product family as actual sales data is collected. Singh et al. discloses comparing product forecasts and actual sales with related products in the same demand groups. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to compare the new product with another product family and evaluate whether there is a good that better matches the new good in order to more accurately forecast for items in the future by ensuring that like products are grouped together.

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As per claim 42, Beyer et al. discloses wherein the comparing and evaluating take place after the actual sales interval, without intervention of the user (See figure 5 and column 3, lines 53-57, column 5, lines 25-45, column 9, line 65-column 10, line 30, wherein the forecasting system, including the updating module, operates without human intervention).

12. Claims 40-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beyer et al. (U.S. 6,798,249) in view of Singh et al. (U.S. 7,080,026) in further view of Ando (U.S. 6,032,125).

As per claim 40, Beyer et al. discloses tracking actual sales of the other good for an interval (See column 1, lines 30-56, column 5, lines 25-45, column 9, line 65-column 10, line 30, wherein actual sales and demand are tracked over an interval). However, Beyer et al. does not expressly disclose that the actual sales interval includes a plurality of causal periods and evaluating takes place on a causal period by causal period basis. Singh et al. discloses causal factors (See at least column 3, line 55-column 4, line 5, column 8, lines 60-67), but does not expressly disclose sales intervals evaluated on a causal period by causal period basis.

Ando discloses a sales interval with a plurality of sales intervals that are evaluated on a causal period by causal period basis (See figures 3, 4, and 7, column 2, lines 1-20, 30-40, and line 66-column 3, line 3, column 4, lines 20-30, column 6, lines 55-65, wherein the forecast is broken down into shorter periods for evaluation).

Beyer et al. discloses storing sales history data for goods as associated when the goods are in a product family. Beyer et al. further discloses that this product family shares certain life-cycle characteristics, such as monthly demand profiles. Beyer et al. also discloses grouping a

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new product with a product family before any sales data is known about the product and then comparing the new product with the product family as actual sales data is collected. Singh et al. discloses comparing product forecasts and actual sales with related products in the same demand groups. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to compare the new product with another product family and evaluate whether there is a good that better matches the new good in order to more accurately forecast for items in the future by ensuring that like products are grouped together.

Further, Both Ando and Beyer et al. disclose demand forecasting for a product using a profile of historic data. Both the systems are computer-implemented. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have the updates of Beyer et al. occur in predetermined cycles, such as the predetermined assessments of Ando, in order to increase the speed to action of the system by causing the assessments to occur on a definable, on-going basis. See column 2, lines 1-20 and 30-40, which discloses the precision of repeated model optimization based on demand fluctuation.

As per claim 41, Beyer et al. discloses tracking actual sales of the other good for an interval and evaluating takes place on this interval basis (See column 1, lines 30-56, column 5, lines 25-45, column 9, line 65-column 10, line 30, wherein actual sales and demand are tracked over an interval). However, neither Beyer et al. nor Singh et al. disclose that this actual interval is daily or more frequent periods.

Ando discloses an actual interval that is short/daily (See column 2, line 65-column 3, line 5, wherein daily forecasting occurs).

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Beyer et al. and Singh et al. are combineable for the reasons set forth above. Further, both Ando and Beyer et al. disclose computer implemented systems that perform demand forecasting for a product using a profile of historic data, wherein the forecasts are reanalyzed and updated over time intervals. Ando discloses forecasting and learning/adjusting on forecasting periods such as daily. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use a daily interval as the actual interval for reassessment in order to increase the speed to action of the system by causing the assessments to occur on a definable, on-going basis. See column 2, lines 1-20 and 30-40, which discloses the precision of repeated model optimization based on demand fluctuation.

Response to Arguments

13. Applicant's arguments with regards to the rejections based on Beyer et al. (U.S. 6,978,249) have been fully considered, but they are not persuasive. In the remarks, Applicant argues that Beyer et al. does not teach or suggest (1) creating a cloned daily sales history for goods at a particular selling location from daily past sales history data for a new product on a location by location basis, (2) scaling a cloned daily sales history for individual selling locations, (3) a persistent cloned daily history file or reference that is subject to scaling or future analysis in light of actual sales, (4) As per claim 8&9, Beyer et al. does not disclose modifying the data set since Beyer et al. does not produce a persistent cloned daily sales history data set, but only intermediate data, (5) the limitations of claims 10-11 and 14-15, because Beyer et al. teaches normalization and future demand extrapolation, which is contrary to scaling a cloned daily sales history by storing a scaling factor that applies to the discrete data, and that (6) with regards to

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claim 6-7, Beyer et al. does not teach cloned daily sales histories for a plurality of locations, and thus when combined with official notice still cannot teach the basic element of the claim.

In response to argument (1), Examiner respectfully disagrees. Claim 1 and 39 (and their dependent claims) recite cloning sales data at a plurality of locations, not at a particular location. Further, as asserted above in the 35 USC 112, first paragraph, rejections, there is not sufficient written description for daily sales being cloned from past daily sales history, and thus this is being construed as cloned sales history and past sales history. Beyer et al. does disclose creating a cloned sales history for a good based on actual sales history data of a product that closely resembles this new good, the sales data associated with the new good. See figures 2 and 4, column 1, lines 30-56, column 2, lines 40-55, column 3, lines 37-55, column 4, lines 1-20 and 40-50, column 8, lines 64-67.

In response to argument (2), Examiner respectfully disagrees. Again, claims 1 and 39 (and their dependent claims) recite that the data is for a plurality of locations, not at a particular or individual location. Further, as asserted above in the 35 USC 112, first paragraph, rejections, there is not sufficient written description for creating cloned daily sales histories and thus this is being construed as cloned sales history. Beyer et al. does disclose scaling cloned sales history in figure 5, column 2, lines 50-67, column 4, lines 50-65, column 9, lines 55-65, with the sales history data being adjusted to calculate expected sales.

In response to arguments (3) and (4), Examiner respectfully disagrees. First, as asserted above in the 35 USC 112, first paragraph, rejections, there is not sufficient written description for creating cloned daily sales histories and thus this is being construed as cloned sales history.

Further, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., a persistent cloned file) is

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not recited in the rejected claims. Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993). The claims never recite that there is a persistent file created and there is no reason, based on the claim language, to construe the history data as such. Beyer et al. does teach rescaling the cloned sales history data based on actual sales of the other good during the interval in figure 5, column 5, lines 25-45, column 9, line 65-column 10, line 30. These areas of Beyer et al. disclose adjusting the sales history data based on received demand data to adjust the calculated amount. Further, figures 2 and 4, column 4, lines 10-20 and 35-67, column 5, lines 25-45, disclose that the associated sales history is modified when associated with the new product. Therefore, Beyer et al. does teach rescaling in light of actual sales as well as modifying the sales history data.

In response to argument (5), Examiner respectfully disagrees. Examiner is unclear what Applicant specifically means by this argument. Whether or not Beyer et al. normalizes and performs future demand extrapolation is irrelevant to whether or not Beyer et al. discloses storing a scaling factor and performing scaling. Specifically, the data would be scaled using such a factor before the steps of normalization and extrapolation would occur. See prior art asserted above. Therefore, Beyer et al. does teach the limitations of claims 10-11 and 14-15.

In response to argument (6), Examiner respectfully disagrees. Beyer et al.'s discussion of cloned daily sales histories for a plurality of locations is addressed above with regards to arguments (1) and (2). Therefore, the proposed combination does teach and suggest each and every limitation.

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14. Applicant's arguments with regards to claims 3, 40, and 41 have been fully considered. New art rejections have been established above. Therefore, these arguments are moot in light of the new grounds of rejection.

15. Applicant's arguments with regards to the single reference 103 rejections of claims 39-42 have been fully considered and are persuasive. New art rejections have been established above.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

DeBiasse (U.S. 2003/0028420) teaches comparing actual sales against forecasts.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Beth Van Doren whose telephone number is (571) 272-6737. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 8:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

lwd

bvd

December 10, 2006

Beth Van Doren
AU 3623
Patent Examiner